

The world took little note of Mathew Brady's arrival. He was born in New York about 1823. Even he wasn't sure of the date. Not much is known of his parents. Some say they came from Ireland. Others say they were born in the United States.

Not much is known of Brady's early life. Not until he and the camera met did he seem to come to life.

The camera was first shown at a world's fair in Paris. At the fair was a young American artist named Samuel F. B. Morse. He later became famous as the inventor of the telegraph and the Morse code. But that year—1839—his big interest was cameras.

In 1840 Morse returned to New York. There he set up a photography school. It was the first in the country.

Brady enrolled in that school. And from that day on, the camera was his whole life. In those days the camera was just a small wooden box. But Brady could do wonders with it.

By 1845 his pictures were winning prizes all across the country. He went to Washington often. He met most of the country's leaders. He photographed the faces of those who made history. He recorded the news of the day for all time. His camera truly was, as he said, "the eye of history."

In 1861 the Civil War began. Brady had to photograph that great event, no matter what the danger. As he put it: "A spirit in my feet said *go*, and I went. . . ."

President Lincoln approved of Brady's

plan. But he made one thing clear: the government could not help him. He would have to pay all costs himself. Brady agreed. He began at once to train photographers. He set up twenty-two teams of them. He sent them out to take pictures on every front, at every battle.

Other photographers were soon on the scene. But Brady's men beat them all. Nine out of ten of all war pictures printed were signed *by Brady*.

By the end of the war he had thousands of pictures. But he had spent all his money. In fact, he owed a great deal. In time he had to sell most of his pictures just to pay his bills. And then he dropped out of sight.

In 1891 a reporter was walking down a street in Washington. He happened to see a sign in a second-story window. It read simply: BRADY—PHOTOGRAPHER.

Could this be the Brady of Civil War fame? The reporter went in. He found Brady—then sixty-seven—very much alive.

But Brady had only a few years left. He died on January 15, 1896.

The Library of Congress gathered all the Brady prints it could find. Together, they show the living story of the nation in his day. But of Brady himself there is little record. He kept no diaries. He wrote few letters. Few people knew him well, although many knew his work. To this day, Mathew Brady remains a dim figure behind a camera. The man who recorded history is almost lost in the shadow of great people and great events.

CHECK YOUR READING

1. **Mathew Brady did not know**
 - A when he was born
 - B what his home state was
 - C who his parents were
2. **Samuel F. B. Morse first saw a camera at**
 - A an army show
 - B a world's fair
 - C a boy's school
3. **Morse later became famous for inventing the**
 - A telephone
 - B television
 - C telegraph
4. **Morse set up America's first**
 - A photography school
 - B camera factory
 - C movie house
5. **The first cameras were made of**
 - A wood
 - B metal
 - C glass
6. **Brady took pictures of many famous men in**
 - A Paris
 - B Washington
 - C London
7. **Lincoln told Brady that the government would not**
 - A allow him to photograph the war
 - B pay for the costs of his photographs
 - C let anyone else take photographs
8. **Brady sold most of his pictures because**
 - A no paper would print them
 - B he needed money badly
 - C they did not interest him
9. **When the reporter saw him in 1891, Brady was**
 - A old and forgotten
 - B upset and afraid
 - C rich and famous
10. **Today most of Brady's photographs are in the**
 - A Library of Congress
 - B Smithsonian Institution
 - C Washington Monument